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HISTORY OF TEXAS GEOGRAPHY.

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The great diversity of jurisdiction exercised over the area embraced within what is now known as Texas, and the geographical changes consequent upon the many political vicissitudes through which it has passed, render the history of its political geography peculiarly interesting, though complicated, and in many respects puzzling.

It is probable that no part of the Western world has been subject to so many sovereignties, or has furnished so many bases for international contention.

All that part of its geographical history prior to 1819 is involved in an uncertainty and obscurity which has baffled the patience and genius of even so great an exploiter as Mr. H. H. Bancroft, and if we were to content ourselves with the progress he and other historians have made, and with the conclusions arrived at by them, many disconnected fragments and political coincidences would remain as idle excrescences upon the pages of our history, and among the accumulated piles of annals covering a period of over two hundred years.

As these fragments are gathered up, one by one, and classified in the order of their significance and logical relation to each other, it begins to dawn upon us that the various processes through which we have grown into our present proportions have followed each other in a somewhat orderly development, and that the time may come when it shall be possible for that interesting period of our history to be presented as a harmonious and philosophical story.

Unrequited individual effort has accomplished nearly all that has been accomplished along that line, but when we reflect upon the fact that much that is material to our history is buried among the tomes at Madrid, Mexico City, Guadalajara, Zacatecas, San Luis Potosi, Queretaro, Saltillo, Arizpe, Chihuahua, and even in our own San Antonio, and all in a foreign language, the present generation may almost despair.

What is here contributed is intended as a pioneer effort to class-

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ify some of the most important events which go to make up our geographical history.

Prior to 1685, Spain had accumulated many evidences of a claim to title to most of what is now known as Texas, but no beneficial use or occupation having followed her various discoveries and explorations, her right was merely nominal. The discovery of America by Columbus in 1492, and the empty ceremony of a confirmation of her title to the whole of the Western continent, two years later, by Pope Alexander VI, constituted the beginning of Spain's claim. The discovery of the main land of the continent, bordering the Gulf of Mexico, and the formal assertion of Spanish dominion by Ponce de Leon in 1513, gave an additional claim to all that territory extending from the peninsula of Florida to Yucatan, named *Florida* by its discoverer. This was followed by the explorations of Pineda in 1518, Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon in 1525, and others; but the results were of no great practical importance until those under the auspices of Velasquez culminated in the conquest of Mexico by Cortez in 1521. By this conquest, Spanish occupation extended up the Gulf coast as far as the Panuco river, which became the western boundary of "Florida." Panfilo de Narvaez had been sent to Mexico to supplant Cortez before the final consummation of the conquest, but was defeated by Cortez, and, returning to Cuba, and afterward to Spain, he secured from Charles V a concession of "Florida" in 1526. In 1528, well equipped for the purpose, he landed at Tampa Bay and undertook an expedition which ended in disaster. The same concession was made to Ferdinand de Soto in 1537, and he was provided with the means for exploration and conquest. His expedition, though more successful than that of de Narvaez, also ended in disaster. A small remnant of de Narvaez's men, headed by Cabeza de Vaca, having escaped the perils of the sea, were stranded on the coast of what is now Texas, and, making efforts to reach Mexico, traversed a part of what is now Western Texas, while De Soto's expedition, after his death, traversed a small portion of what is now the extreme northeastern portion of Texas. In 1540, Coronado, in his expedition, touched the extreme western limit of Texas, and other explorers from time to time traversed the western limits of the country, but no effort was made towards a permanent occupation before 1690.

The descent of La Salle down the Mississippi river and his formal

assertion of French dominion in 1682, and the permanent occupation and use which followed after 1699, severed the claim of Spain to what was then called Florida. With this, perhaps the most important event in the history of the geography of the American continent, properly begins the history of the geography of Texas. Two hundred years had now elapsed since the discovery of Columbus. The splendid empire over which Charles V. and Philip II. had reigned had now dwindled into a second-rate monarchy, and the pretentious claims of Spain in the western world had been curtailed by certain international laws to whose operations she had been subjected by the nations of Europe. Her claims had been gradually pushed down to the southern border of the continent, and France now stood an impassable barrier between her possessions east and west of the Mississippi river. Florida had now lost its identity west of the Mississippi, and held a most slender tenure north of the 31st parallel and west of the Perdido river.

In parcelling out the American continent among the nations of Europe, two international laws had come to be regarded as binding: One provided that occupancy of the continent at the mouth of a river emptying into the sea entitled the occupant to all country drained by that river; the other provided that when two nations made discoveries on the same coast, the middle distance between them became the boundary. Under the former, France acquired her title to all the Mississippi river watershed, a title disputed later in other regions, and by virtue of other claims, the merits of which are immaterial to our subject.

La Salle named the country discovered, Louisiana. The French colony located there grew and prospered to such a degree that Antoine Crozat, the merchant prince of his day, sought and obtained the privilege of its exclusive commerce in 1714, and engaged St. Denis in furthering the enterprise. The establishment of a trade with Mexico enlisted the energies of St. Denis, and he soon began to project plans for a commercial connection with the inhabitants of that distant region. His first step was the establishment of a trading post at Natchitoches, on Red river. From that point he had surveyed and marked out a highway from Natchitoches to the Rio Grande, conspicuous in the subsequent history of the country as the "old San Antonio road." He visited the authorities of Mexico on the Rio Grande, and his negotiations finally resulted in the

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policy, on the part of Spain, of taking possession of what had, then, become known as Texas.

The establishment of missions, presidios and settlements was then undertaken on a scale sufficient to insure Spanish dominion over the entire territory of Texas.

In the establishment of these settlements, due regard was had to the rights of France to Louisiana, by fixing the most easterly Spanish settlement at Adaes, about twenty miles west of the most westerly French settlement at Natchitoches. As that settlement was on the east bank of the Red river, the Spanish authorities located Adaes near the junction of several small streams which united and formed a tributary of Red river, and thus laid the foundation for a claim to all the Red river watershed on the west and south, and subsequently asserted their claim to the main stream of that river.

Shortly after these occurrences, a war broke out between the two nations, and French troops took advantage of the opportunity to invade Texas and drive the Spaniards west of Trinity river. The latter soon re-established their settlements, strengthening that at Adaes so as to be prepared for any further encroachments by the French. A peace was shortly afterwards declared, but the French declined to entirely give up the territory, and insisted upon having the Rio Grande as the western boundary of their claim, basing their right upon the discovery and attempted settlement on Matagorda bay by La Salle in 1685. Since the conquest of Cortez in 1521, Spain's dominion on the coast had not extended farther north than the Panuco river, and the French contended that as the Rio Grande was the middle distance between that river and Matagorda bay, the boundary of France properly extended to that river. No serious effort, however, was made to maintain that claim. Matters remained in *statu quo* between Natchitoches and Adaes until 1735, when the French moved their settlement from the east to the west side of Red river, several miles nearer Adaes. This action met with little opposition beyond a protest from the Spanish commandant at Adaes.

The opposing claims stood thus, each nation successfully resisting the further advance of the other, until 1762, when Louisiana was ceded to Spain by France. As this cession mentioned nothing as to the boundary between Louisiana and Texas, it remained unsettled until 1819. In 1800, Louisiana was retroceded to France,

just as France had ceded it to Spain, and in 1803 France sold it to the United States, with no specification as to the western boundary, thus devolving the responsibility of a final adjustment upon the United States and Spain.

After thus quieting all attempts at French invasion on the east, Spain realized the necessity of extending actual dominion over all the territory claimed by her, and especially over that unoccupied part of her territory exposed to the Gulf of Mexico. There was a scope of country north of the Panuco river, bounded by the provinces of Nuevo Leon on the west, Coahuila on the north and north-west, and Texas on the northeast, which had remained in possession of the native tribes of Indians ever since the conquest. The measures adopted for bringing that region under the jurisdiction of Spain finally culminated in the establishment of the province of Nuevo Santander, now the State of Tamaulipas, and in definitely fixing the western boundary of Texas.

No definite boundaries had been fixed to any of the provinces named contiguous to this vast country, for the reason that their colonial development had not required it, but the area extending 100 leagues north and 50 leagues west, extending from the Panuco river to the Rio Grande, was regarded generally as the limits of the new territory to be brought under the civil jurisdiction of Spain; in other words, the Rio Grande was regarded as the southwestern limit of the province of Texas, when the work of subjugating and civilizing this area was entrusted to Escandon.

In 1746 he subjugated most of the savage tribes inhabiting this region, and in 1748 was entrusted to complete the work and bring the region under the complete dominion of Spain. He proceeded with his forces as far east as the Rio Grande, and established missions and settlements. The Governor of Texas at that time was making Adaes his capital, under orders from the viceroy, in order that he might watch the movements of the French, and be in a position to guard the eastern boundary of the province against encroachment. Escandon dispatched a part of his forces in the early part of 1749 across the Rio Grande, and they proceeded as far east as the Rio Guadalupe, where they found the old mission, La Bahia del Espiritu Santo, virtually abandoned, and took charge of it. In going thus far, they exceeded the limit of the territory originally contemplated in the commission to Escandon—instead of stopping

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when he had traversed the distance of 100 leagues, his forces went 185 leagues. When this was ascertained, he was ordered by the solicitor general of New Spain to move back to the San Antonio river. The doors, bells, and other movable appurtenances to the mission were taken down and carried to Santa Doretea (now Goliad), and the mission and presidio established there, and the San Antonio river was for a time regarded by the authorities of Nuevo Santander as the eastern boundary of that province.

Affairs were in this shape when the Governor of Texas resumed his residence at San Antonio, soon after the cession of Louisiana to Spain, and after all causes for French encroachment on the east had been removed. In the interim between 1750 and 1764, the authorities of Nuevo Santander issued titles to land as far east as the San Antonio river, and exercised jurisdiction in other ways. This brought about a conflict between the respective provinces. The territory of Coahuila and Nuevo Leon had also been encroached upon by the authorities of Nuevo Santander. To settle disputes as to the extent of the boundaries of Santander, and determine its jurisdiction over such territory as was contiguous to these provinces, and to protect the vested rights acquired within the disputed boundaries, the complaints of the Governors were laid before the proper authorities at Mexico City and Madrid. All disputed matters were adjusted by decrees, which were formulated into a royal cedula. To this cedula was attached a map designating the boundaries. It was filed among the archives in 1805, and photographic copies of this map have been used in judicial proceedings in the courts of Texas affecting titles to lands situated in the disputed territory. By this map, the western boundary of Texas began at the mouth of the Rio Nueces, thence up that river to its junction with Moros creek, thence in a northeasterly direction to near the Garza crossing of the Medina river, thence up that river to its source, thence in a direct line to the source of the San Saba river; thence northwesterly to the intersection of the 103d meridian of west longitude and the 32d parallel of north latitude, thence northeasterly to the intersection of Red river by the 100th meridian, thence down said river. The first call from the source of the Medina is northeasterly, but the source of the San Saba is the point aimed at. A previous map of Humboldt, compiled from an official map in use at Mexico, and used in the debate over the compromise measures pending before

the United States Congress in 1850, corresponded in many respects with this. The parallels and meridians of Humboldt's map were more than 170 miles from their true location, as since ascertained, but, taking the natural objects called for, they corresponded in most essentials, as far as the lines went, with the royal map of 1805.*

Such were the western boundaries of Texas in 1803, when the dispute as to the eastern boundary of Texas was again taken up by the United States and Spain.

The sale of Louisiana was bitterly opposed by Spain, and formal delivery of possession of the territory had not been made when Napoleon sold it to the United States, and only twenty days elapsed between the delivery by Spain to France and the delivery by France to the United States.

Spanish forces were reluctantly withdrawn from New Orleans and transferred to the western border of Louisiana. Much diplomatic correspondence ensued touching the boundaries, but no practical results followed until late in 1806, when the United States mobilized troops west of Red river. To counteract this, Spanish troops were mobilized east of the Sabine, when, on the 5th of November, 1806, the two armies confronted each other. An armed conflict seemed imminent, when an armistice was agreed upon, by which hostilities were to cease until such time as the two nations should otherwise settle the question of boundary. It was agreed between the respective commanders that a strip of country, since famous as the "Neutral Ground," should not be encroached upon by either nation. The eastern limit of this neutral ground was a line equidistant between Adaes and the Arroyo Hondo, and the western limit the Sabine. Northern and southern limits were not fixed. The matter of the eastern boundary remained in this state for about thirteen years. Spain conceded nothing beyond what she had virtually conceded to France seventy years previously. In the

*1. Prieto's History of Tamaulipas contains the map compiled by Escandon and deposited with his official report among the archives at Mexico in 1755.

2. The royal map of 1805 seems to be confined to natural objects, leaving the matter of meridians and parallels for further determination.

3. To Col. B. Coopwood, Laredo, Texas, I am indebted for the sources of much of the information concerning the western boundary of Texas.

meantime, the United States ignored Spain's claim to the main stream of Red river. Louisiana was admitted as a State in 1812. Civil jurisdiction was extended west of Red river below the neutral ground whenever the necessities of her increasing population demanded it. Arkansas Territory was cut off, and Indian Territory set aside as a reservation for the Cherokees and other Indians. Indian Territory embraced the Red river watershed west of Arkansas on the south, as well as north of Red river.

Spain had always claimed to the main stream of Red river, and had assigned the territory to Texas and New Mexico. On the other hand, Mr. Jefferson and his advisers and their successors claimed the Red river watershed on the south as well as north. Nacogdoches was the most northerly settlement in Texas, and Captain Pike's chart had located it about eighty miles south of the 32d parallel, and thus, with the aid received from Humboldt's map, fixed in his mind this parallel as a proper division line between Spain and the United States south of Red river. Before the ratification of the treaty of 1819, Cherokee Indians began to occupy Indian Territory, the treaty having been made with them in 1817, so that when the country was wrested from Spain by Mexico they had begun to occupy the country on both sides of the river. Finding themselves cut off by the treaty ratified in 1821 by Spain and in 1822 by Mexico, they applied to the latter for proprietary rights to the country north of the 32d parallel, south of Red river; but failing in this, they obtained a permissive occupancy. In the Fredonian war in 1826, this was agreed upon as a line between them and Edwards' colonists. In 1835, a treaty was made with them, recognizing their rights to the sovereignty of the soil; but, being provisional, it was repudiated by the Republic of Texas, which, though refusing to recognize them as constituents of the sovereignty, continued their permissive occupancy until their alliances with the enemies of the Republic of Texas forfeited that right, and they were driven from Texas.

By the treaty of 1819 (ratified by Spain in 1821, and by Mexico in 1822), boundary disputes between Spain and the United States were finally adjusted. By that treaty, the boundaries between the two nations were fixed as follows: Beginning at the mouth of the Sabine river, thence up its west bank to the point where it is crossed by the 32d parallel of north latitude; thence north to Red river;

thence up that stream to where it is intersected by the 100th meridian of longitude west from Greenwich; thence due north to the Arkansas river; thence up that river to its source; thence north to the 42d parallel of north latitude; thence west to the Pacific Ocean. This took from Spain all territory east of the Sabine, below the 32d parallel, and added it to Louisiana, while it took from the United States the whole of the Red river watershed on the south from Louisiana and Arkansas to the 100th meridian, and the whole of the Mississippi river watershed west of that meridian, south of the Arkansas river. Florida was purchased by the treaty, so that it was tantamount to an even exchange of territory. The feeble claim which the United States asserted to the Rio Grande was formally abandoned.

The United States had a valid claim to the Mississippi river watershed, extending to the Rocky Mountains, but De Onis, the Spanish minister who negotiated for Spain, by representing to Mr. Adams that the source of Red river was only a few leagues from Santa Fe, and that such proximity of the two nations might endanger their peace, and that the intermediate country was so impregnated with nitre as not to be susceptible of habitation, and, therefore, valueless, induced Mr. Adams to stop at the 100th meridian.

These were the limits to Texas when the country was wrested from Spain by Mexico in 1821, and the limits as recognized by Mexico in 1822.

Mexico having become a Republic, and adopted a constitution in 1824, consolidated the territory of Texas with that of Coahuila, and organized the two into one State, known as the State of Coahuila and Texas, with no change in boundaries while it remained under the sovereignty of Mexico.

Liberal colonization laws, a homestead exemption of 4428 acres of land to heads of families, and one-fourth that quantity to single persons, protection against debts contracted prior to removal to Texas, freedom from taxation for ten years, and many other inducements, soon brought an influx of Anglo-American population. After a prosperous growth of ten years, events began to transpire which had their culmination in the separation of Texas from Mexico, and its erection into an independent Republic in 1836.

The Congress of the Republic of Texas, on the 19th of December, 1836, fixed the western boundary at the Rio Grande, from its

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mouth to its source, and from its source to the 42d parallel of north latitude.

The only area within this limit adversely occupied was the inhabited portion of New Mexico east of the Rio Grande, known as Santa Fe. With a view to establishing peaceful relations with that part of the country, President Lamar had fitted out an expedition in 1841. Upon their arrival in New Mexico, they were treated as public enemies, made prisoners, and sent to Mexican prisons.

During the next year, Mexico made two efforts to regain a portion of Texas, one in the spring, another in the fall of the year; but both were driven back across the Rio Grande. Nothing further had been done in the way of exercising jurisdiction over any unoccupied territory when the subject of annexation to the United States began to be agitated in both countries. Annexation was consummated in 1845 by Texas merging herself into the United States as a State. There were certain stipulations of the terms known as Articles of Annexation. One of them devolved upon the United States the responsibility of settling boundary disputes with other nations; another provided for the erection of four additional States out of her territory when the State desired; and another provided that the line of 36 degrees 30 minutes should be respected as to slavery.

At the time of the adoption of these articles of annexation, the only nation disputing the boundaries of Texas was Mexico, and that dispute was not as to any western boundary, but was as to the right of Texas to establish a boundary at the Sabine, Mexico still refusing to recognize her right as an independent nation to fix any boundary. Annexation was fully consummated in February, 1846, and the United States began to move her troops from the outposts of Louisiana to the western borders of Texas. This was regarded as a *casus belli*, and the troops of the United States were attacked by those of Mexico. War followed, and, after it, in 1848, came the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. By this treaty, the boundary line between the two Republics began "in the Gulf of Mexico three leagues from land, opposite the mouth of the Rio Grande; * * * thence up the middle of the river * * * to the point where it strikes the boundary of New Mexico; thence westwardly along the whole southern boundary of New Mexico (which runs north of the town called Paso) to its western termination; thence northward along the western line of New Mexico until it intersects

the first branch of the River Gila; * * * thence down the middle of said branch and of said river until it empties into the Colorado; thence across the Colorado, following the division line between Upper and Lower California, to the Pacific Ocean."

The *southern* and *western* limits of New Mexico, mentioned in this article, are those laid down in the map entitled "Map of the United Mexican States, * * * Published at New York in 1847 by J. Disturnel."

This treaty settled the only dispute as to boundaries which had previously existed between Texas and Mexico, but boundary troubles did not cease with this. The United States now raised the question of a boundary between Texas and New Mexico, the claim of Texas to all that portion of the States of Tamaulipas and Coahuila, east of the Rio Grande, being conceded. The title to Santa Fe was denied, and the matter furnished the basis for a long debate in both houses of the United States Congress. Senator Rusk's contention was that the old maps proved nothing, and afforded little or no light upon the subject, and took the position that the claim of Texas to the Rio Grande had its origin in the revolution of Texas, citing numerous official acts on the part of Mexico, beginning with the capitulation of General Cos at San Antonio in December, 1835, and ending with the address of the Mexican peace commissioners to the people of Mexico in 1848. Mr. Volney E. Howard, in the lower house of Congress, went more fully into the details of the errors of old maps, exposing most of them, and resting his claim mainly upon a proper construction of the Articles of Annexation, one of his strongest points being that as the United States, in one of the articles, had expressly recognized the right of Texas to territory north of 36 degrees 30 minutes, beyond and outside of any limit which either Spain or Mexico had ever assigned to Texas, the right of Texas to it differed in no wise from her right to Santa Fe, and both having been acquired by the same acts, one could not be recognized without the other; in other words, the language of the article included Santa Fe. The debate became sectional, and the views of the partisans culminated in the compromise act of November 25, 1850, by which Texas, in consideration of \$10,000,000, gave up all territory north of 36 degrees 30 minutes, and all west of the 103d meridian of west longitude as far south as the 32d parallel of north latitude. The area thus parted

with embraced more than 100,000 square miles, now included in New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas, and Oklahoma.

There was yet another adjustment to be made. The treaty of 1819 described the 100th meridian "as laid down on Melish's map." This meridian was more than 100 miles east of the true 100th meridian. In the act of December 19, 1836, the Republic of Texas made her eastern boundaries coterminous with the western boundary of the United States, as fixed by the treaty of 1819. The area between the true 100th meridian and the 100th meridian according to Melish's map, extended from Red river north to the parallel of 36 degrees 30 minutes, and was more than 100 miles in width, embracing an area of about 16,000 square miles. According to strict construction of the treaty of 1819, this strip belonged to Texas. It was held by the Supreme Court of the United States, however, that Texas was estopped from claiming this strip, for the following reasons:

1. Because, by the compromise act of 1850, wherein she ceded all territory north of 36 degrees 30 minutes and west of the 100th meridian, it meant the true meridian and not the Melish meridian.
2. In the creation of the counties of Lipscomb, Hemphill, and Wheeler, the true 100th meridian was made their eastern boundary.
3. The ascertainment of the true 100th meridian had been acquiesced in, recognized and treated as the true boundary by various acts of Texas, and that both governments had treated that as the proper boundary in the disposition they made of the territory involved, through a long series of years.

This view being virtually conceded as to all the strip, except 3840 square miles east of the true 100th meridian, and between the forks of Red river, the question for solution was, as contended by the United States, whether the line following the course of Red river eastward to the 100th meridian met the 100th meridian at the point where it intersected the lower fork of Red river, or whether it intended the upper fork, as contended by Texas. At the former place, the United States had erected a monument to indicate the intersection of Red river by said meridian, in 1857. On the same meridian, where it met the 36 degrees 30 minutes parallel, another monument was erected. In other words, which was the main stream of Red river? If the north fork, then the area was in Texas; if the south fork, it was outside of Texas.

This question was submitted to the Supreme Court of the United States, and by that tribunal was held as belonging to the United States.

Thus, it will be seen that Texas lost the territory which was regarded as belonging to her up to 1749, by the unauthorized expedition of Escandon east of the Rio Grande; lost all that portion of her territory east of the Sabine below the 32d parallel, and gained the Red river watershed on the south as far west as the 100th meridian, by the treaty of 1819; regained the country east of the Rio Grande which she lost in 1749, and acquired all of Coahuila and New Mexico, east of the Rio Grande, in 1836; compromised her claim to more than 100,000 square miles of territory, in 1850; and, by failing at the proper time to assert her claim, lost about 16,000 square miles between Red river and the parallel of 36 degrees 30 minutes between the 100th meridian and the line specified in the treaty of 1819, and formally claimed by the act of her Congress in December, 1836. As a province, her territory on the east and west was curtailed, and her northern boundary enlarged. As a separate political entity, she was merged into a State of Mexico, and virtually lost her political identity; marked her limits by the sword in 1836, and in 1850 sold about one-fourth of her domain to the United States, and by want of due diligence has conferred a prescriptive title to the 16,000 square miles upon the United States.

These are the main steps by which she has adjusted her outward form and assumed her present proportions. The processes by which her political subdivisions have developed towards fixity are somewhat less interesting, though peculiar, and, in their initial steps, different from those of any State of the American Union.

To get even a superficial comprehension of these, some knowledge of the political structure of the several sovereignties under which she has maintained her identity is necessary.

Exclusive of the ecclesiastical and military establishments, the civilized population of the country was not sufficient to require any sort of civil establishment until after San Antonio had been settled. About the year 1715, the municipality of Bexar was created to meet the needs of that settlement. Under the then status of population it was unnecessary, as well as impracticable, to assign any definite limits to that municipality. The functions of the officers of the municipality were judicial and executive only. Unlike the British-

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American system, the citizen had no voice whatever in shaping the political policies of the country, even in the smallest details of local polity. In Florida, California, and other States where beginnings were Spanish, as well as in Texas, whatever local civil government existed, existed under the form of the municipality. When Florida passed under the sovereignty of the United States, the municipality lost its identity. Mexico adopted a constitution in 1824, and made a subdivision intended to be political, and called it the Department, but, except in Texas, colonial development was not sufficiently advanced to afford a test of its merits as a part of the machinery of republican government.

Texas began her existence as a separate province of Spain in 1727, and in the long interval that elapsed between that date and 1824 only two additional municipalities came into permanent existence—La Bahia and Nacogdoches.

Under the Constitution of 1824, the municipality was retained, with no radical changes of function, and, colonial development in Texas being rapid, the number of municipalities was increased, so that, at the meeting of the Consultation in 1835, the number was eighteen, and, to meet the needs of the settlements, five new ones were created, so that, at the date of the formation of the Constitution of the Republic, there were twenty-three.

Texas was annexed to Coahuila, and jointly they became the State of Coahuila and Texas, and the latter was constituted the Department of Bexar. Each department was to have an executive officer, called Political Chief. While he was doubtless intended to be an executive officer simply, the Constitution of Coahuila and Texas clothed him with many judicial powers. Each department was also entitled to a representative in the State Congress of Coahuila and Texas. This representative was chosen by a departmental electoral college, which had been previously elected by a college of ayuntamientos, elected by the direct votes of such suffragans as, under the rigid suffrage laws of the State, were entitled to the elective franchise. The ratio of representation in the Federal Congress was one to every 40,000 of population; and in the State Congress, one to every 7500. The inhabited area of Texas at that time extended from San Antonio in the west to Nacogdoches in the east, and to Red river in the northeast, and inland from the Gulf as far as the falls of the Brazos. The great diversity of interests implied

by this extent of area was intensified by the incongruity of the population inhabiting it. It goes without saying that this sort of political structure was wholly unsuited to the development of a truly republican system of government, and wholly out of harmony with the ideas of the Anglo-American republicans, who now began to realize the need of some efficient system of local government. To partially meet this want, the territory of Texas was about equally divided into two departments, Bexar and Nacogdoches, in 1831. With the exception of a small settlement around Nacogdoches, this virtually separated the Anglo-American and native Mexican population, and in 1834 a new department was created, mostly from the Department of Nacogdoches, and called the Department of Brazos. This was exclusively under the control of Anglo-Americans, and for the first time in the country's history an Anglo-American Political Chief was appointed. With the rapid increase in population came the greater necessity for a more efficient system of local government. This led the people, in 1832, to a concert of action to secure it. This resulted in an assembly constituted by representatives from the municipalities, so that each center of population might have a voice in formulating some political policy for the country. There was another meeting of the same sort in 1833.

The main object of these meetings was to secure separate statehood for Texas. This was refused. During the two years following, the President of Mexico assumed dictatorial powers, and the emergency for separate political action arose. The people again assembled in 1835, and by representatives from all the eighteen municipalities adopted a plan of government, inviting five other centers of population to participate, which they constituted municipalities. This assembly was known as the Consultation of 1835. Texas was constituted a separate State; the Political Chiefs of Nacogdoches and Bexar were ordered to cease their functions, and the Political Chief of the Department of Brazos was transformed into the Governor of Texas. This ended the department as a part of the political machinery of Texas, and the municipality took its place *eo instanti*, as the political unit. The only remnant of Mexican structure under this plan was the executive council selected to aid the Governor, which soon showed its want of adaptation to needs of representative government. The powers of this assembly being limited, a convention composed of representatives from all the mu-

municipalities, and clothed with plenary powers, was called to meet March 1, 1836. This convention promptly convened on that day, and, on the next, declared Texas independent, and framed the Constitution for the new Republic. That Constitution provided for dividing the territory into counties, to be not less than 900 square miles in area; a provisional government was organized; the Constitution submitted to and adopted by the people in September following. In October, the first Congress of the Republic of Texas assembled, and, instead of formally dividing the Republic into counties, recognized the existing municipalities as such, defined and adjusted their boundaries, subdivided them, and created new ones as circumstances required it, and provided such machinery as was requisite to an efficient system of local republican government. The ayuntamiento, the alcalde, and other relics of Spanish monarchy, gave way to the county court, the justice of the peace, the sheriff, and other insignia of a truly representative government. From 1836 to 1897, the process of subdivision has gone steadily on, until, from the twenty-three municipalities, with a vote of 4322, we have grown into 244 counties, 224 of which are organized, having a vote of 540,000, and in the peaceful enjoyment of all the blessings which a truly republican form of government vouchsafes.

What the future geography of our State will be, it is not the province of this paper to discuss. The basis for that article of annexation which provided for the erection of her territory into five States has long since ceased to exist, and the article itself stands upon the pages of our history as a mere relic, into which no magic of political ambition can ever infuse life; the memories of the Alamo, Goliad, and San Jacinto, are every year taking deeper hold in the minds and hearts of the people; her 750,000 school children march each year more proudly to the music of the battle songs of '36; the orator, poet, and historian are every year embalming the glories of the struggle which gave birth to the young empire. United from Sabine Pass to El Paso, and from Texarkana to Brownsville, by hands of steel, common and equal partners in an indivisible heritage of a university and other higher institutions of learning, in a common school endowment of \$12,000,000, and a landed endowment equal in area to the State of Indiana, all cementing her citizenship into one common policy, our unity becomes more compact as the years roll by.

Her political subdivisions, however, will continue. Areas which produced 350,628 bales of cotton in 1870, and 3,154,000 in 1894, 6,000,000 bushels of corn in 1850, and 107,000,000 in 1895; which had only 571 miles of railway in 1870, and 9500 in 1895, and have made giant strides in all those things that contribute to human happiness and human greatness, will allow no pent-up Utica to circumscribe their powers, but will continue to burst their bands and readjust themselves to the constant demands of new conditions as long as civilization shall endure.